

The Phoenix*i*x



**Featuring
More than
Just Sparkly Bikinis
and High Heels**



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SNOWY NIGHT AND WARM DELIGHT:

It may have been cold, but POESY and Matthew Good warmed our hearts with their beautiful singing and witty stage banter.

Curtis Woodcock
Arts Editor

This past Sunday, Matthew Good serenaded a wonderfully intimate crowd at the Creekside Theatre in Lake Country. He made the stop here during his current solo acoustic tour, and it was one of his best performances to date. As an avid Matt Good concert goer, and attending a previous acoustic tour, this one was one of the more exciting experiences. Good always succeeds in putting on an incredible show and his banter between songs is both hilarious and socially conscious.

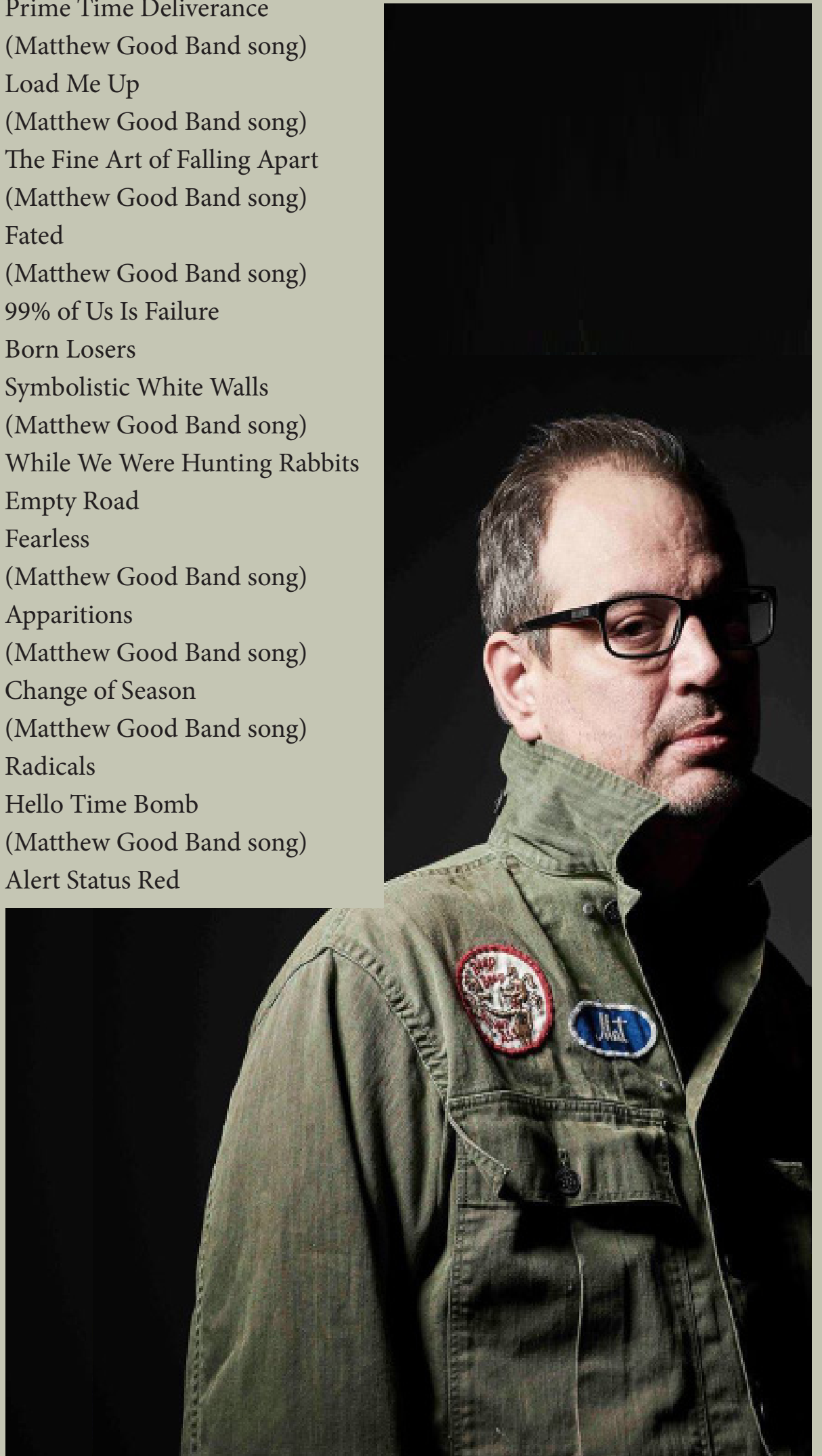
POESY opened up the show, mesmerizing the crowd with her beautiful lyrics, incredible vocals, and a wonderfully reimagined version of Chris Issac's "Wicked Game." Her vocals were haunting and definitely sent shivers down the audience's spines during several moments. Accompanied by a key-

boardist, the set was simple and breathtaking. POESY proved to be an artist worth keeping your eyes on.

Having been a long time Matt Good fan, it was so special to be able to witness the songs he chose to play in his set. Good played many deep cuts, fan favourites, and wonderful reimagining of non-acoustic songs. His vocals were on point and filled with emotion moving some audience members to tears. Between songs, he had the whole crowd laughing to stories about his past, and even some stories about the infamous album *The Audio of Being*, the last album the Matthew Good Band released before their breakup. Since the show was the smallest show of the tour, it was an honour to be able to witness how amazing it was to be up close and personal with such a Canadian legend. Matthew Good gave his attending crowd one of the best shows of 2019 so far.

Matthew Good's Setlist:
Champions of Nothing

Prime Time Deliverance
(Matthew Good Band song)
Load Me Up
(Matthew Good Band song)
The Fine Art of Falling Apart
(Matthew Good Band song)
Fated
(Matthew Good Band song)
99% of Us Is Failure
Born Losers
Symbolistic White Walls
(Matthew Good Band song)
While We Were Hunting Rabbits
Empty Road
Fearless
(Matthew Good Band song)
Apparitions
(Matthew Good Band song)
Change of Season
(Matthew Good Band song)
Radicals
Hello Time Bomb
(Matthew Good Band song)
Alert Status Red



IT'S TIME FOR ART

This Family Day, come and discover some amazing art and create some for yourself!

Curtis Woodcock
Arts Editor

The Kelowna Art Gallery is offering many fun and interactive activities this family day. These events will be hosted from 10:00 AM and continuing until 4:00 PM, ranging from gallery tours to art labs.



The Gallery offers a viewing of "The Poetics of Space" which features a range of work by 29 different artists, including a painting by Emily Carr and a large and intriguing pipe sculpture by Roland Brener.

There will also be an installation called "Our Lives Through Our Eyes: Nk'Mip Children's Art." This exhibit presents the works of art created by children and youth during the era of World War II. The young artists were a part of the Inkameep Day School, located on the Osoyoos Indian Band reserve. There will be family friendly tours of the gallery offered at 11am and 2pm.

The Gallery's Art Lab will also be open and will provide many self-directed activities for creative play at all ages. Families and young artists can explore the medium of printmaking and create their own printed tote bag using block printing inks, a traditional print-



ing press, and artist-quality printmaking tools, participants will discover mono printing techniques and uncover their creativity. Everything needed will be provided, and the

staff will be able to assist with any questions. This exciting family event costs \$5 to attend. Support local events this Family Day and spend some time creating and learning about art and

works with deep meaning. Bring your brothers, sisters, moms, dads, grandparents, anyone that may enjoy spending some time with you and doing something outside of the norm.





CELEBRATING CUBAN DANCE:

Cuba Vibra is sure to delight with beautiful colours, wonderful music, and talented dancers.

**Curtis Woodcock
Arts Editor**

The Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Society is back with another mesmerizing show in their Spotlight Dance series. On Friday, March 15, come and witness Dance Cuba's Cuba Vibra.

Coming straight from the island, Liz Alfonso's Dance Cuba bring their irresistible heat. Boasting a twenty dancer ensemble that fuses cha-cha, rumba, conga,

and mambo, along with an accompanying seven-piece live band, the group has performed all over the world in over 200 cities and five continents. Their talent has enabled them to be a part of festivals such as the Central Park Summerstage Festival in New York as well as the Laminat Toronto Festival of Arts and Creativity. They have also shared the stage with such acts as the National Ballet of Cuba, the Ballet of the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, and the National Ballet of China. Dance Cuba was the first Cuban dance com-

pany to perform in the Latin Grammy Awards Ceremony in 2015, and the first ever Cuban company to stage a show at the New Victory Theatre in 2003.

Liz Alfonso founded Dance Cuba when she was only 23 years old. She was trained at a prestigious Cuban ballet school as well as Spanish dance academies, graduating from Cuba's Higher Institute for the Arts with a focus in theatre and drama. Alfonso established a Dance Academy, Children's and Youth Ballets, chore-

ography courses and competitions. Her love and passion for educating children won her the International Spotlight Award presented by Michelle Obama in 2016. She won several notable awards for her choreography amongst which are awards including The National Culture Order, Canada's Dora Award for Best Choreography in a musical, and the First Choreography Prize from the Cuban Artists and Writers Association.

With all of these credentials, the show will most certainly be

breathtaking. In the words of the Vernon and District Performing Arts "vacation with us inside our theatre to the colourful, flavourful, and spectacular Cuban culture, and enjoy the hottest dance party you'll experience this spring with Cuba Vibra!"

Tickets will be \$48 dollars for adults, \$45 for seniors, and \$43 for students. The show is sure to be filled with vibrant colours, beautiful dancing, and a lot of talent.

DOES STRESS AFFECT WOMEN MORE?

Examining the different sexes' response to stress.

Willa Holmwood
Staff Writer

Stress is a ruthless killer. From shortening life spans to increasing disease susceptibility, this 6-letter word plagues every university student and faculty member across campus. According to a 2011 survey conducted by the American Psychological Association, women are more likely to report the following in comparison to men: a more significant deal of stress, physical symptoms associated with stress, a higher value of stress management, and a greater attempt to cope with stress.

However, stress doesn't only affect women. The Center for Disease and Control reports that 110 million people, men and women included, die every year as a direct result of stress. This is 3 times the entire population of Canada. With such massive

effects on society, it is interesting to examine the possible sex differences that exist in the stress response. Coping strategies for stressful events vary between men and women. Several studies have found that women focus on emotional reactions while men utilize problem-based methods. Some examples of these emotional responses could include watching the Titanic while eating ice cream or crying while snuggling golden retriever puppies. Problem-based methods could consist of fixing a car that keeps breaking down or breaking up with that significant other who is always on your case. Either way, it is important to note that these results exist on a continuum for both sexes.

While the psychology of stress reveals a lot about sex differences, biology also contributes to some exciting findings. The neuron consists of many parts.



Photo by Lauren St Clair

One part that is essential to the stress response can be attributed to tiny spines that protrude off the dendrites. These spines are involved with learning and memory functions that can contribute to the experience of stress. One study showed that exposure to an acutely stressful event increases spine density in the male hippocampus but decreases spine density in the female hippocampus. This may suggest that the learning and memory that is facilitated by these spines can increase the stress response through a continuous cycle. According to this logic,

more dendritic spines may lead to more stress experienced. But why do these sex differences exist? One possibility can be traced back to the roots of evolution. Before the days of Skip the Dishes and Amazon Prime, men and women used to spend their time differently. Ancestral homosapiens would leave the females at home to guard the offspring, while males would venture out into the world to seek food and supplies. Evidently, males experienced a higher level of stress from the dangers in the outside world compared to the females in a relatively stable envi-

ronment. Perhaps the evolutionary mechanisms that male ancestors developed led to a long-term adaptation of the current human stress response.

Despite the generalizations from many theories and research studies, stress is a subjective experience. No stress is better or worse, and both men and women face significant consequences from stress. With exam season in full throttle, finding time to cope with stress and take care of family and friends is essential. Don't let stress be a killer!

Not Just Sparkly Bikinis and High Heels



Exploring the not-so-glamorous side of bikini fitness competitions.

Melissa Weiss

Scroll through Instagram in search of fitness inspiration, and there is a good chance you'll be mesmerized. Perfectly paired sports bras and leggings. Washboard abs. High intensity interval training and leg routines you can pump out from the comfort of your own living room. #FitFam #NoPainNoGain. One particular trend that stands out from the rest is the bikini fitness competi-

tion. You've probably seen it before: impressively-toned women donning sparkly swimsuits and heels.

According to Fit Centric, a bikini competition is essentially a mix between bodybuilding and a beauty pageant, where contestants are judged "physically based on the proportion of [their] body, muscle tone, and beauty aspects such as tan and hair."

Around 15000 women participate in National Physique Committee competitions every year – committing themselves to a world of tupperware meal prep, sweaty gym workouts, and glitzy show days. But just how rigorous is this fitness culture? Are its effects maintainable? And what happens to contestants after the heels hit the shoe rack?

Unsurprisingly, training for these competitions can be intense. Diet plans are rigid and precise; sometimes diet plans note calorie allowances down to the exact number of almonds. [<https://www.muscleandfitness.com/muscle-fitness-hers/hers-nutrition/12-weeks-competition-body-diet-plan>]. In an

interview with Daily Mail, past competitor Natalie Keegan disclosed her experience with the competition, describing a "gruelling regime in [the] final weeks [that] involved 2.5 hours of cardio but just 900 calories."

According to Gym Junkies, it takes 12 to 16 weeks for athletes to prepare their bodies for bikini competitions. Between cardio and lifting, this should amount to 1.5 to 2 hours of gym time each day. And everything builds up to Peak Week – "the final

week before the stage [where] you'll be void of carbs. This means you'll be shedding most of the water from your body by manipulating your salt and water intake and taking a diuretic. You'll also sit and sweat in the sauna."

Like most intense workout regimes, bikini competitions come with a myriad of pros and cons. According to Fit Centric, positive aspects of the sport include:



Photo by Alexandr Podgorchuk

“ [She] had multiple kidney infections, depression, anxiety, hormonal imbalance, and bulimia/binge eating disorder... All of them were drinking red wine to dehydrate. ”



Photo by Alexandr Podgorchuk

Self Confidence: “You’ll have completed a goal by being consistent, and accomplished it because you’re doing it for you.”

Increased Knowledge: “As well as challenging your body, you’ll have challenged your mind.”

Glamour: “After months of sweat in the gym, there’s something exciting about picking out your bikini colour and getting dolled up.”

Photoshoots: “Check out photographers that have experience in capturing bodies and movement.”

Like-minded Friends: “You’ll meet people who are going through the same thing as you.”

However, for every positive element to bikini competitions, Fit Centric also mentions a negative counterpart. These include things like post-show blues, costliness, body-dysmorphia, and com-

paring yourself to others.

For some, repercussions from the popular fitness trend have proved to be even more severe. Mary Jelkovsky is a popular Instagram model, and self-proclaimed “body confidence coach and ex-bikini fitness competitor.” On her blog, she says she initially thought the competition was worth it because she “was one of 96% of women in the world who was unhappy with [her] appearance.”

Jelkovsky’s blog goes on to describe her struggles with excessive exercise and eating disorders, both of which she says were normalized by her involvement in bikini fitness contests. She recalls one time where she “spent five hours at the gym running on the treadmill while wearing saran wrap, hoping to negate everything [she] ate the night before.”

Eventually, the “binge/purge/restrict cycle [...] escalated to a point where [she] had multiple kidney infections, depression, anxiety, hormonal imbalance, and bulimia/binge eating disorder.”

In a video on her YouTube channel, Jelkovsky shares a story of when she confided in her bikini fitness coach about her struggles with bulimia. But instead of pointing her in the direction of eating disorder and recovery help, he told her it was normal, and even gave her some tips on foods that could be more easily

purged.

Now, Jelkovsky uses social media to spread body positivity, warning followers not to feel ashamed of extra weight just because society tells them to. On a December 9, 2018 post comparing her bikini fitness body to her current body, she wrote: “[...] Remember that just because your body changed doesn’t mean you’re not the same wonderful human you were 10 pounds ago and taking up less space will not make you better, more beautiful, or more worthy than you are now.”

Jelkovsky isn’t the only ex-bikini fitness competitor who warns about the dangers of the sport. The Independent interviewed fitness Instagrammer Chessie King, who shared stories of girls backstage who were intensely exhausted from their restrictive diets: “All of them were drinking red wine to dehydrate. They were so drained and it was just so sad to see them.”

King also deemed post-competition care to be the most difficult part of the process, admitting to binging on unhealthy amounts of sugary food after competing. One time, she went to the grocery store and ate a family-sized bag of chocolate before ever reaching the till.



Photo by Alexandr Podgorchuk



Photo by Alexandr Podgorchuk

She revealed that it took her “a year and a half to fully get back to a healthy relationship with food and exercise.” Past bikini fitness competitor Oenone Forbat notes on Instagram how she “probably won’t compete again, [but has] so much respect for those who do.” She came in fifth place when she competed, and noted

that she’s a “firm believer that it is more than ok to train for aesthetics, and you want to look and feel good.” However, just like Jelkovsky and King, she wouldn’t want to compete again. “It certainly is not a healthy lifestyle for anyone, constantly putting your body under stress both during prep and off season,” added Forbat.

So what is the takeaway? Well, it depends on who you ask.

For some women, bikini fitness competitions are empowering, and a way to attain a higher level of physical fitness. For competitor Darcel Muslar, there was a positive transformation on her life “I went into this to change my

body [and] to set an example for my kids that you can do hard things if you want to.”

But for others, the pressure to reach often unattainable goals can become so great that the competition is no longer worth it. As Jelkovsky said, “I couldn’t silence the voice in my head screaming

‘stop doing this to yourself’ any longer.”

Regardless, the most powerful way to start off the road to better fitness can always be boiled down to real and genuine #BodyPositivity.